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literature

THE DANCE OF ÇIVA

TO-DAY AND TO-MORROW

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of this Book*

THE DANCE OF ÇIVA

LIFE'S UNITY AND RHYTHM

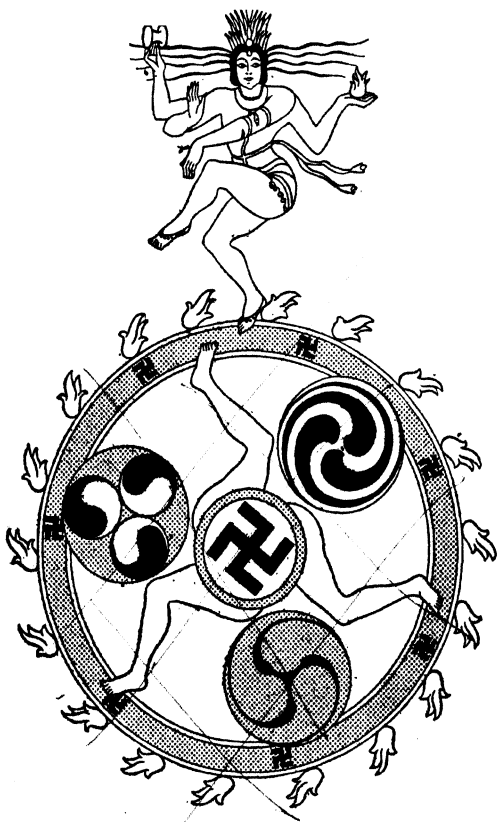
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THE DANCE OF ÇIVA

THE conviction that seeming diversities and differences are but passing and rhythmically varying phases of a fundamental unity led the East to symbolize Life and Death as the ever-supple and continuously flowing Dance of Çiva, in which construction and destruction are rhythmically pulsating patterns that the subtle dancer eternally presents and dissolves with the swiftness of a rapidly turning wheel. Modern science, likewise, is conquering fresh fields of knowledge since it became aware that many traditional barriers are illusory. Civilization itself is a ceaseless rhythm in which Western and Oriental characteristics are vividly remembered patterns rather than actual attitudes arrested in their motion. This essay suggests that recognition of the ceaseless and musical flow of the Dance of Çiva is the antidote to vain regrets for a pattern that has dissolved only because it never was fixed, and that reverent acknowledgement of this underlying synthetic unity is the most promising cure for the jealousies and misunderstandings that have arisen from a Western habit of assuming that phantom barriers and conventional categories have tangible existence.

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There is a picturesque and significant saying that "the wood cannot be seen for the trees". At the present moment each country in Europe is so busy contemplating the particular trees standing in its path and overshadowing its contemporary life—the Great War and its aftermath of unemployment, economic and social confusion, ranks as a veritable king of oaks!—that it is unable to get a view of the wood as a whole. In more brutal language : the Great War of 1914–18 was not fundamentally a cause of present disturbances but a symptom of them. No attempt, therefore, to get a view of "the wood", however far off, needs apology.

It is the custom in England
Phantom to assume that our history
Pales and our civilization, as part of
the history and civilization of
Europe, began with the Roman period.
Mr. Baldwin, the Prime Minister, in his
presidential address to the Classical
Association in January, 1926, once more
gave concrete expression to this

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assumption. He alludes to what his distinguished hearers no doubt believed, with him, to be a fact, that Great Britain and the nations of Western Europe "learned their first lessons in citizenship from the same mother"—the Roman Empire; and again he says, with quiet conviction, that "Western Europe was forged on the anvil of Rome."¹

To very many people in England Britain's history begins with Cæsar's invasion, beyond which clear-cut pale there is something quite different in kind from "civilization"—"barbarism". We are, indeed, very prone to such conceptions; what we call our civilization is a chequer-board marked off by such conventional "pales" into imaginary compartments aptly characterized as "watertight". Our political, social, and economic life has been as characteristically patterned by hedges, dykes, and fences as the English countryside. The arts and sciences have been as carefully stabled, each in its particular stall, with halter and chain to prevent straying, as our English domestic cattle. In this we have merely followed the general tendency of Western Europe, whose intellectual and social life for centuries tended to become so increasingly characterized by categories and compartments that the dividing

¹ *The Times*, 1st January, 1926, on the page devoted to "Education".

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pales came to be recognized at last as the principal features of the landscape.

Perhaps if we can detach ourselves sufficiently from the hour and the place we can get a bird's-eye view of this process. Everyone is familiar to-day with the map-like aspect of a countryside as seen in a photograph taken from an aeroplane. It is in a view, such as this, of Europe during the last 2,000 years that we may be able to see the wood into which the history of Western European society is now entering, and whose trees so cumber the way as unwarrantably to circumscribe the prospect by that imaginary and purely conventional pale which cuts off "Western Europe" and "our civilization" from that other category known as "barbarism". But, looking down from a great height, as though from a flying machine, and casting backwards in time and eastwards in space, where shall we find this pale? If Rome brought civilization to Western Europe, where are the pales that divide Rome herself, in time, and in space, from contact with a "meta-West" and from "pre-Roman" times? As well might we seek to mark a precise boundary line in the waste of water lying between the crest and the trough of a wave, or the precise moment in time in which winter passes into summer or day into night! "A.M." and "P.M." are no less conventions than the precise

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height on a lady's stocking, agreed upon by the feminine public opinion of the day as the boundary line between the height of fashion and the height of indecency to which her skirt shall attain.

What we actually see is that a slow tide of ideas and customs spread westwards, overflowing Europe much as flood waters creep gradually over a flat landscape, changing many of its apparent features yet failing to dompt others which stick out of the water stark and uncompromising by contrast with the surrounding dead level. They are witnesses to the fact that the substratum, though obscured, remains unchanged. Here and there, thanks to inequalities in the ground, we see a spate, and here the flood not only scoops up the earth and stones from the bottom of the valley and carries them along to be deposited miles from their original provenance, scarifying and carving out a deeper and deeper bed as it rushes on, but actually brings with it, from its distant source, a yellow load of foreign elements, diversified with trees, drowned animals and remains of bridges and houses torn from the land it devours only to be used as battering rams where-with new damage may be wrought. After the passage of a torrent such as this the face of the land is utterly changed, not merely in aspect, but in its constituent character. Yet, as we watch these floods

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gradually spreading westwards we notice that rivers in spate bear a very small ratio indeed to the area flooded. This image is applicable, in a general way, to more than the westward-flowing ideas which culminated in the Roman Empire, for it is also true, in the main, of human migrations. Our habit of inserting an imaginary pale dividing post-Roman from pre-Roman has successfully obscured—for most people—this last fact, that the Roman Empire was not the beginning of an epoch in time but the peak of a tendency exhibited by a large proportion of human society. Indeed, if we concentrate our gaze still more steadily on the period and place of this peak we shall see that the particular phases of Western civilization which it is generally agreed to derive from the Roman Empire are in reality the dying efforts of a flood, the tiny ripples that defiantly fling themselves even higher on the beach than true highwater-mark when the incoming tide has already turned to the ebb.

To retain this image of waters and tides for a while longer, there is a moment when the turning tide in a great river, or in such a land-locked, narrow-mouthed gulf as that of the Morbihan, causes the water to flow in two different ways at once. According to the nature of the bed there is greater or less disturbance. In the Thames I can watch, from my window,

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the moment when the laden barges, lying at anchor and swung out by the turning tide at right angles to the course of the river, appear to be held athwart it by the force of these two contending currents. It is only a moment, however, till they drift round to their new position, strung out in line with the river banks. But in the Morbihan, that "little sea" outside whose shelter Cæsar's mobile, man-powered navy broke the Gaulish maritime power (dependent on wind and sail), the ebb commences only some forty-five minutes after the tide has turned outside in the open sea. The waters of this inland sea are treacherous at any time, but during this period of lag they are almost terror-inspiring as one's sinagot careers madly, broadside on, on the bosom of one current while the other, racing in the contrary direction, piles up a curling wall of furious seething water and ever and anon creates great pools of oily surface with an angry vortex at their heart. Or again, with the square sails set and only gently filled, one may be sailing across the path of a tidal current not conscious of a drop in the wind when one realizes with a sensation as of nightmare, that the boat is progressing backwards and will continue so to do until the tide once more turns, or till she is wrestled with and forced out of the tidal waters. It is often quite as difficult, from a contemporary standpoint,

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to determine whether the social and intellectual life of a nation—or group of nations—in a given period of time, and as a whole, is still flowing evenly in the old direction, impelled by the accustomed tide, or has long been setting in the opposite direction, obedient to an ebb that appears as yet but as an undertow.

Nevertheless, let us make the **Contacts** endeavour to take our bearings.

Rome exerted her maximum influence on Europe—an influence which extended to England and a part of Wales—at the moment when all those habits of thought characterizing Roman culture had reached the peak of their expression. It is an almost impossible task to focus Roman culture into a single easily recognizable trend of thought, but no one will deny that there was a concreteness, a rigidity of discipline, a hardness of outline, a definiteness of category that manifested itself throughout Roman thought, Roman art, and Roman politics. It stands out—and if we ask “why?”, the answer is “by contrast with all that had gone before *in Europe*”; in Europe such as it is reflected for us in references in the writings of contemporaries, and such as students of archæology and prehistory have been able to postulate it for us by a scientific

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examination of the evidence of "pre-Roman" remains. Was this Roman culture, so concrete, so firm in outline, evolved by the Romans in Rome? A study of the remains of the city of the early Romans, and of the remains of the cities superposed on it, will at once render such an opinion untenable. Roman culture was the result of contacts from without impinging on ripe virgin territory, just as every other culture that has made history has been the result of foreign ferments working in a hitherto characteristic medium—as, indeed, most forms of new organic life with which we are familiar result from penetration and fertilization from without of an egg containing or drawing from its envelope a native supply of food with which to nourish the germ. If Rome was the mother of what Mr. Baldwin regards as Western civilization, Greece was the father. That, however, merely takes us a step further back—or further east if we will—in the manner of the age-old puzzle, to the question of the parentage of Greek culture. That problem in itself may be easy enough to solve; a Minoan mother and a "barbarian" father coming from a vague "North"; and if we were to press for the parentage of Minoan civilization we should be shown an Anatolian mother, belike, with an Egyptian father; and if we press for the parentage of Anatolian

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culture we should probably have indicated to us a Mesopotamian or "Indo-Sumerian" mother with an unknown father coming, perhaps, from the north-west or the Mongolian desert! In this genealogy we observe two things: we get further and further east as we go further back in time and derivation, and as we go east we find ourselves being constrained to trace the descent in the known maternal rather than the conjectural paternal line. It likewise becomes more difficult to differentiate the matrix from the penetrative element. For the purposes of our bird's-eye view, however, we have gone far enough. The testimony of literature—of the autographic record of thought—as of a comparative juxtaposition of the thought of East and of West, shows us that in Greek culture there was an original element. An element sufficiently original, at all events, to be clearly contrasted, together with all that has derived from it, from characteristically Oriental thought as it is known to us. If we want to focus this originality to a point, that point would appear to be Socrates—and the system of thought transmitted from him, via Plato to Aristotle. On this foundation, if we will but be honest and recognize the fact, is reared the whole edifice of that Western system on whose model we erect our logic and our science, and by

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whose canons we largely regulate our social and political action. Greek art itself, which stands out as something original, has contributed a good deal to the form of Western civilization in its expression of a desire for regularity, repetition, symmetry, alternation¹—in short, for that kind of order which is so defined and tangible that one is tempted to see in it segments and categories, a right and a left, an "I" and a "thou" to the complete obscuration of any underlying, rhythmic one-ness. Before Greek art had found itself and become characteristic it had far less of this definiteness of type and category, this alternation that suggests the pistons of a reciprocal engine rather than the continuous rhythm of the Dance of Çiva. To take a very banal illustration, the "Westerner" has had this alternation so beaten into him by tradition that decorative objects are constantly made in pairs, so that they may occupy a "right" and "left" position on the parlour mantelshelf. Go as far east as one can, to Japan, and one finds that although balance—the compensating beat in rhythm—is all important in decoration, yet even the lowliest has a horror of equidistance and symmetrical arrangement as smacking of something

¹ *Vide* de Ridder and Deonna in *l'Art en Grèce*, in Deonna's chapter on "Some aspects of the Greek Ideal" (English translation).

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barbarous, unnatural, almost morbid ! It is also true that in music the Western development, in measure as it loses contact with the East, loses its rhythmical character. I have more than once been struck with the difference in the rendering of a popular tune that is to be observed in the whistling of a street boy in London from the manner in which it is phrased by an ignorant Irish boy. The London boy whistles it with the absolute regularity of a ticking clock, whether or no there was rhythm in it as the composer imagined it. The Irish lad changes it completely because he imports rhythm into it—whether or no the composer himself intended it. And Ireland, as I have emphasized elsewhere, has never been subject to that Roman influence to which Mr. Baldwin attributes English civilization !

Monsieur Paul Masson-Oursel, **Categories** who has written a most stimulating book on the comparative study of the philosophy of the West, of the East, and of the Far East,¹ has brought out, in his chapter on their comparative chronology, the interesting fact that the earliest known and recorded efforts of philosophic thought

¹ *La Philosophie Comparée*, Paris, 1923 (English translation, 1926).

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in Greece, in India, and in China manifested themselves almost simultaneously towards the beginning of the sixth century B.C. (Our method of computing the passage of the centuries imposes upon us one of the most artificial and confusing of categories or compartments from the point of view of a world history of civilization.) He is emphatic in pointing out that the relative unity of humanity, despite its subdivision into distinct types, results less from direct and accidental contacts than from the intermediate types which shade off into those that are most characteristic. Therefore when M. Masson-Oursel finds (*a*) that the intellectual movement known as the Renaissance is characteristically Western, and (*b*) that it is the direct descendant of the Hellenic spirit whose apogee was expressed in Plato ("link between the last and greatest of sophists, Socrates, and the first and greatest of scholastics, Aristotle" ¹) we need not accuse him of an obstinate Westernism which refuses to do justice either to Oriental or anterior influences. Of scholasticism—just because he finds the same characteristics in the scholasticism of all three environments studied—he pertinently remarks that it is because it assumes truth to have been permanently and definitively unveiled that it expends

¹ Ibid.

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its energies in defining it, and he finds that Europe's chief originality consists in her thought having escaped the prison of language thanks to a painful rupture with scholasticism. The Renaissance, he adds, gave it its death wound. We may accept all this, and yet, if we compare early Western thought with early Oriental thought, we still find that two opposite conceptions of the universe characterize them. On the one hand there is the Voice proclaiming on the banks of the Ganges : " They who see but one, in all the changing manifoldness of this universe, unto them belongs Eternal Truth—unto none else, unto none else ! " ¹ And on the other the tendency, going back to Greek thought, to divide and sub-divide, to form compartments and to define categories, to insist on distinctions which differentiate rather than on an underlying oneness which unites. Masson-Oursel, in his chapter on Comparative Psychology, shows how our traditional conception of mental activity is peculiar to the West. Thus it is a European idea to sub-divide the human being into two categories of " body " and " mind ". And this habit of ours—of splitting up our conception of human life into these abstract compartments instead of contemplating it in its multiple unity—he

¹ Friday evening discourse of Sir Jagadis Bose at the Royal Institution, 10th May, 1901.

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traces historically right back to the Greeks. In the same way the notion of "freewill", as we envisage it, is peculiar to the West. Neither Indian nor Chinese thought knows anything of it. They do not divide up mental activity into categories and compartments. "Thought" and "will", as we differentiate them, are to the Indian understanding but two aspects of one thing. In the West the imagination lies in one category, the image in another. In India they are one, and what we call images are but fleeting moments. As Masson-Oursel points out: "The creative and destructive 'action' of Çiva is a dance, supple, and continuous, not a consecutive series of filmed photographs in which the attitudes are fixed. The illusion is not in the movement but in the stationariness".¹ (The Indian notion of a "dance", be it noted, is not one of "steps" but of rhythmic, serpentine, continuous movement.) And he reminds us that the most positive amongst us certainly demand, in our psycho-physiological studies and experiments, that they should confirm postulates we have inherited from Democritus, Socrates, or Plotinus. This he does to emphasize his contention that the comparative study of Eastern and Western systems of thought is essential for the proper teaching of philosophy or the adequate comprehension

¹ *Comparative Philosophy* (Eng. trans.), p. 186.

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of the workings of the human mind. It ought not to be a matter of indifference to us, he concludes, that other minds in other parts of the world have held to be equivalent, functions which, in our eyes, are distinct. It is claimed by both that the evidence supports, in the one case their fundamental identity, in the other the distinction between them.

Secondary Influences If we now begin to see that those aspects of Western civilization which we can trace to the Roman Empire are not so much—to use a horticultural figure—the full flowering and fruitage of a young plant that was first planted by the Romans when they had conquered Gaul and Britain, as—to revert to our flood symbolism—the dying ripples of a flood that had started on its course ages before, and far to the east, and had reached its maximum force and momentum in Cæsar's day when it percolated through the gaps in the Alps and overran the boundaries of the Province, then we may also, perhaps, realize the extraordinary hold over educated Western minds that the essentially Greek system of thought has contrived to maintain through all these many centuries. This is not to deny that there have been other influences: there was the Oriental religious inspiration

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of Christianity. Yet by the time that it penetrated beyond Rome its philosophy was Graeco-Roman and its rite was profoundly influenced by the concrete form into which Rome had translated Persian Mithraism. We are speaking, of course, of the unreformed Church as it was spread by Roman missionaries. There was a simpler Christianity, assimilated to local Celtic thought, and coloured by native pre-Celtic superstitions, which flourished for a time in Ireland and even reacted on the western confines of Britain and Alba and as far afield as Brittany, but its mild philosophic—almost poetical—influence on European civilization was obliterated by the concrete and disciplined Church organized in Rome and efficiently marshalled for battle and conquest. Jesus of Nazareth, the gentle Jew whose life and teaching—and death—were so orientally full of humility, never reigned in Rome. “Pontifex Maximus !” The title of the Head of the Church—the Ruler of the City, the would-be successor to the Cæsars—is blazoned all over the magniloquent architecture of the first Christian City. No honest observer could say that Christian ideals of conduct—that is to say Oriental ideals—have had anything like the same influence on Western civilization as Buddhist ideals, for instance, have had on Asiatic civilization, or as Mohammedan ideals of conduct

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have had in the sterilization of every native civilization which their fighting missionaries have succeeded in subjugating to Islam. Medieval chivalry, which is often made to masquerade as one of the peculiar fruits of Christianity, was a social system, and a code of behaviour that was as characteristic of the Middle Ages in Japan, in Rajputana, and among the Saracens (not to mention its earlier prototypes in Han times in China) as it was of Christian Europe. The peculiarly European idealization of womanhood, which may have been influenced by mariolatry, can hardly be cited as fundamentally Christian, since mariolatry was one of the foreign elements (a great deal older than itself) which Christianity assimilated after its adoption by the Roman world.

Another somewhat innocuous influence was that of democracy. Although several small Greek states had been democracies, the system was quite foreign to the Roman idea, notwithstanding the fact that before Rome was an Empire and a political power in Europe she had been a small Republic. Republics, indeed, have often been created by little groups of theorists. Apart from classical examples with which most people are familiar, Gaul was continually throwing them up, whenever, indeed, an intelligent member of a reigning family, not sufficiently strong to stand

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alone, became dissatisfied with the tyranny of the existing local king, or whenever a powerful druid (in the Cæsarian acceptation of the term) wished to remove a king who exercised too great a check on his own authority. These republics were generally fated to be superseded by new petty kingdoms—when their purpose had been served. The American Republic was created by a group of theorists dissatisfied with the colonial government of an English king, and has long since given place, in all but its name, to something the very antithesis of a democracy such as the Northern peoples who invented the characteristic folk-moot or parliament understood popular government. Ulster dissenters were the first Irishmen to clamour for a republic when royalist Anglo-Irish Dublin refused to do the bidding of the dissident and rebellious colony of English and Scottish settlers in the North—though Ulster does not like to be reminded of the incident now that, become *plus royaliste que le roi*, she professes to be so shocked at the equally artificial demand for a republic put forward by certain Southern Irish dissidents. Finally, the republics of China and Turkey, and the union of Soviet Republics in Russia, are as little governments by a democracy as modern English government is government by a king. The Republic of France is a byword for govern-

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ment by a bureaucracy, whilst as for the Republics of Germany and the other defeated nations in the Great War, they would not last six months if the victorious nations withdrew their tacit veto on the restoration of a monarchical regime. In England, where the folk-moot idea of government achieved its greatest elaboration and its most significant success, we are somewhat too prejudiced by our pride in the continuity of our own mother of parliaments to be able to realize how little the idea of government by representatives of all sections of the people has made headway in Europe, and how fiercely it is being assailed, alike from the extreme left and the extreme right, in England itself. Democracy, with its government through a central folk-moot, when all is said and done, can work efficiently only in a small state of free-born citizens, all bearing more or less equal responsibility for the production of food and for the defence of the state. Directly the state outgrows the phase in which its citizens are self-supporting as integral units of the organized state, and in which its multifarious business and the welfare of its citizens can be properly and promptly attended to in the folk-moot by persons who are actually representative and cognisant at first hand of the interests of their constituency, a true democracy is impossible. The government of the state

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will either lapse into the hands of a bureaucracy, or else real mob-government will pull and push the rudderless ship of state hither and thither till its movements resemble nothing so much as those of a carcase being tossed among a pack of wild beasts quarrelling as to which shall devour it—and till eventually it breaks up. What has kept the states of Europe in being is neither the Christian religion nor the Nordic notion of democracy, but the traditional conception of order and discipline, of right and wrong, inherited from the culture of the classical peoples. Where that tradition has never been implanted—as in Ireland and Russia—or where it has lapsed and faded from the popular consciousness, as in the Balkans and what was once Turkey in Europe, there has been for centuries but a travesty of settled government, accompanied by a chronic inability on the part of the governing body to put down brigandage and assassination. As was said at the beginning of this essay, if troubles and unsettlement have recently shown an alarming tendency to invade the territories of “Roman” heritors, these things are not the result of the Great War, but are symptomatic of its causes.

As we look down from
The Critical our height, as though from
Spirit an aeroplane, at the last
2,000 years of Europe's
story, we see a period in which this

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classical tradition was very nearly obliterated. We call that period the Dark Ages, perhaps not realizing when we so named it that all germination goes on in the dark. We represent it as being characterized by a "barbarian irruption", by a great "Wandering of Peoples". Professor Eugene Pittard, the Geneva anthropologist, in his book on Race and History,¹ has finally given the quietus (let us hope!) to the notion that a Europe populated by Romans and a few fugitive "Celts" was overrun by fair-haired, blue-eyed hordes of pure Germanic race, who thenceforth almost entirely replaced the Italian race in France and the Romano-British population of England. The conquering Roman legions were no doubt stiffened and officered by Italians of Roman education, but they were largely recruited among the populations of the Roman colonial empire. The Roman army held Europe and North Africa much as the "British" army holds India, and as the Chinese army, centuries ago, held the Western Gate of the Celestial Empire.² The "Barbarian

¹ *La Race et l'Histoire*, Paris, 1924 (English translation, 1926).

² See Sir Aurel Stein's *Ruins of Desert Cathay*, vol. i, p. 399, where he describes finding evidence in military records, dating from A.D. 300, in a Lopnor site, that the common soldiers were chiefly "Hu" or barbarians—i.e. non-Chinese.

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hordes ", though their driving force came from the districts from which the migrations were propelled—just as the flowing ice of a glacier comes from its mountain source—yet gathered up as they advanced a number of recruits from the countries they traversed, just as a glacier carries with it a great deal of débris to be deposited at its terminal moraine. Apart from doubts as to whether the population was homogeneous at the source, we must recognize that the "barbarian hordes" obtained a number of their rank and file from precisely the same human stratum that had furnished recruits for the Roman legions. The anthropological difference was principally in the leaders. The cultural difference was in the language and traditions of these leaders. Hence the Renaissance, when it came, had no great obstacle in its path. Looking at this intellectual movement from the comparative angle which Monsieur Masson-Oursel so earnestly enjoins on students of human thought, we can but agree with him that it was not simply a turning back to the ideas and tastes of classic antiquity. He points out that the protagonists of the new spirit were physicists rather than historians or linguists, and he would select, as the characteristic of the spirit of the Renaissance, an uprising of individualism and an assertion of independence in the

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face of the dogmatic authority of book or of master, and he takes as an illustration ¹ the Reformation which replaced the authority of the Church by the touchstone of individual conscience or reason, and by the mathematical physics of Vinci and Galileo which broke away alike from the written authority of Aristotle and the decisions of Councils, protesting as vehemently against an outside discipline imposed by the one as by the other.

It was the critical spirit—lacking in the Asiatic civilization—which exorcized the prestige of scholasticism. As Masson-Oursel puts it, the return to classicism reinvigorated thought only in so far as a better knowledge of history permitted a comparison to be made between Christian society and Christian science on the one hand and a pagan science with equally justifiable ideals on the other. Whereas—and the reason for this citation will appear later—Indian and Chinese alike consumed their energies in sterile regrets for a fictitious Golden Age whose contemplation had hypnotized them. The “return to Nature” of the Renaissance physicists simply suggested hitherto untried methods in measure as human thought, learning to beware of its own tyranny, humbled itself to go to the school of things in themselves that it might discover in them the laws

¹ *Comparative Philosophy*, p. 112.

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actuating them. Thus Europe alone made the discovery that knowledge was not in the possession of this School or that; that if knowledge lay, not in demonstrating a dogmatic "truth" but in investigation, there were but two sources of information—Nature itself and History. Thus does Monsieur Masson-Oursel justify his conclusion that the Renaissance was purely a Western phenomenon—like the Socratic genius itself. But what was it that started Europe on this study of classic literature and classic art which did in fact reinvigorate thought just because it enabled students to make comparisons and thus stimulated the birth of the critical spirit, the spirit, one might almost say, of proportion?

Before an answer to this question is sought, it may be well to call to mind that the tradition of Rome in Western Europe was an echo, ever growing fainter, of the culminating point of a long phase of human civilization which resulted in the Roman Empire, but which was first set vibrating by the contact of the Roman City with a civilization lying to eastward of it.

And now let us look at
Intellectual what went immediately before
Curiosity the Renaissance. Dr. G. M.
Trevelyan, in his inaugural
address at the beginning of 1926 to the

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Historical Association, pictured the European medieval phase as differentiated from the Dark Ages by an emancipation from authority, and an outward thrust of Europe which was the fruit of intellectual curiosity stimulated by the shock sustained by European civilization when it was brought into contact with the East during the Crusades—a contact, both personal and intellectual, which had already been begun by Venetian traders. For Dr. Trevelyan “the Crusades were the military and religious aspect of a general urge towards the East on the part of the reviving energies of Europe. The prize that Europe brought back from the Crusades was not the permanent liberation of the Holy Sepulchre or the potential unity of Christendom, of which the story of the Crusades was one long negation. She brought back instead the finer arts and crafts, luxury, science, and intellectual curiosity—everything that Peter the Hermit would most have despised.”¹ Dr. Trevelyan does not fail to emphasize the point that we, obsessed by our historical categories of Antiquity, the Middle Ages, and Modern Times (*pace* Masson-Oursel) and our equally rigid geographical categories of East and West, are so apt to overlook, namely that Europe has become more departmentalized

¹ *The Times*, 7th January, 1926 (report of the Address).

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as she has receded in time and space from her early solidarity with the Orient—though he does not express himself thus forcibly. He is content to remark that the English knight speaking French and the English Churchman speaking Latin could travel through medieval Europe from castle to castle and from abbey to abbey and find more that was familiar to them than Englishmen touring in the same parts in the eighteenth century. It was a great epoch, he tells us, this which led men back out of barbarism (!—but let that pass—) into the renewed light of civilization, and it should be conceived, not as a motionless picture in a Morris tapestry but as a series of *shifting scenes*—an image subconsciously suggested, one might hazard, by Dr. Trevelyan's own references to contacts that were Oriental. The conception of the Dance of Çiva is innate in Eastern ideas of movement, of life which is a continuous movement, and therefore of history, which is but a recorded representation of social *life*, and not, as we are apt to regard it, a cinematograph film or series of separate static photographs printed in sequence on one long band of gelatine and made to appear to be moving because wound so quickly over a drum that our eyes are unable to detect the transitions.

The Renaissance, then, ceases to appear to us as a categorized compartment of

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European history, but rather as an inevitable growth, natural as the unfolding of a flower, of European consciousness in which the classical tradition was becoming dim but which was discovered anew as the result of intellectual curiosity aroused by contact with the East. The science of those days was largely borrowed from the Arabs—who got it from still further East—and there were in most European countries at that epoch learned Jews who translated the Arabic treatises into Latin and so made them available to educated Europeans. One has but to dip into that painstaking work of Gross—*Gallia Judaica*, translated from the author's Hebrew MS. into French by Bloch in 1897—to gain some idea of the literary activity of the European Jews of the Middle Ages.

The intellectual impulse of the Renaissance, like the original classical impulse, carried far in time and space. It has carried, like the incoming tide in the Morbihan, right up to our day, albeit the ebb has long since set in in the open sea. It was manifest in the great development of critical science in the nineteenth century. The European character of that science is hall-marked by its obstinate compartmentalism. We still talk of mind and body as of two different and contrasted categories of the human being; of living and non-living, of organic and inorganic life, of the plant world as some-

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thing essentially different from the animal world, and of humanity as of something essentially different from the animals. Our sciences are still rigidly sub-divided into categories, and a pale is still erected between physics and biology. Categories are still evident in our social, economic and political life. The imaginary conventional pale between Capital and Labour is like to wreck our economic prosperity, just as the existence of the fictitious "classes" of Rich and Poor have served as the foundation for a whole edifice of theoretical Socialism. If a just appreciation of the relative was ever necessary, it is necessary here. But the Western habit of erecting pales and constructing compartments has also exercised a very great influence on international relations. The Roman Empire, while it lasted, was a great unifying power. It found a Europe already old and experienced in contacts with the rest of the world, and it exerted a tremendous influence in facilitating these contacts. To employ a geographical image, its famous roads were often but the canalization of already existing streams, to the end that navigation might prove easier and traffic be increased and speeded up. Its man-powered galleys blazed trails across the ocean along routes that had hitherto been kept secret by merchant navigators who at best had been at the mercy of capricious

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winds. To the mixing of breeds that Europe had already experienced for untold generations Rome added a not inconsiderable quota, for not only did she recruit her legions from the populations of conquered territories, but she moved those legions about like pieces on a chequer board, and she deliberately colonized newly subjugated lands by "planting" time-expired soldiers in them. The process was not invented by Queen Elizabeth nor was it first employed in Ireland! And long after the real Roman Empire had collapsed, and that succession "empire" had dissolved of which Charlemagne was crowned emperor in Rome, and which masqueraded under the old name, the fluidity of European society continued, and the contacts between "East" and "West" were maintained. For many a long day an Englishman was more at home east or west of the Rhône than, just prior to the building of the first railways, a Norman would have been in Brittany, or a native of Argyllshire in Dorset. It was not simply a matter of a common knowledge of French or of Latin. A knowledge of Latin certainly assisted, but it was in no wise essential, for example, to the intercourse between the early Irish monks and the conventual establishments of Belgium, Brittany, Germany, and Rome. The Irish travellers were but following in well-worn tracks

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of Celtic times, just as the Danes who founded Dublin were but sailing the sea-routes followed for generations by the pre-historic settlers who colonized Northern Ireland. Marco Polo travelled from Venice to Japan, crossing the Gobi—where “the voices of spirits and goblins” luring men from their course so that they were lost were the greatest danger to be feared—and entering the western gate of China, with greater security and less consciousness of meeting with a human standpoint foreign to his own, than a traveller to-day could expect were he to try to penetrate from India into Soviet Russia, or to take a short cut from a Palestine port to Mesopotamia. As the ferment that followed on the “Barbarian invasions” settled down, and the nucleus of nationalities with roots in the soil began to develop out of the disparate human elements geographically grouped together, there continued to be a constant coming and going, though of individuals and small parties instead of so-called “hordes”, and there was practically no “racial” enmity between the various embryo nations. A traveller must guard himself against brigands and such like dangers of the road, but a frontier that was not a desert or a range of mountains was in no sense a social or an economic barrier. Sharply differentiated nationalities—that is to say, nationalities which are genuinely

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characterized to-day by conscious differences of outlook and custom—have been a progressive and intensive growth. So, too, have been the racial repugnance for one another of men of different colour. Indeed, one would hazard a guess that differentiation of pigmentation itself has been a progressive development, though obviously through periods far greater than those we envisage in dealing with recorded history. Physical instincts must be granted their due share in having accentuated this colour specialization through repugnance of this kind, but that does not invalidate the general argument that the consolidation of national consciousness has been a social rather than a racial phenomenon, any more than this argument itself destroys the physical evidence of differences in breed among mankind. The mistake is to suppose that the two things run parallel to one another. Germans and Frenchmen are not necessarily different in breed because they are German and French. But neither are all Germans of the same breed because pan-Germanism has been a popular political creed.

That wood of which
**Super-
characterization** we spoke at the beginning
—whose trees obscured our
view of it—appears to con-
sist in a culmination of characterization

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entailing almost unavoidable clashes of interest. European civilization, instead of taking measures to minimize or counteract the natural consequences of this progressive, this "forced" differentialization, has intensified and emphasized them by its traditional tendency to categorize and classify and to erect conventional pales and barriers even where the underlying unity is more in evidence than the superficial variation. It has been a tendency to pervert rhythm into jerks, to cut the circle into segments, to see the backbone of life as a disarticulated series of vertebræ on a demonstration table rather than as a continuous nervous cord whose continuity is essential to the existence of an organized being. It is a tendency which has manifested itself detrimentally to social progress in both international and domestic politics just as it has hindered the onward march of science. There have been contributory causes, of course. One of them has been ethnological and has flowed naturally from the real—not the usually assumed—circumstances of the various human migrations and invasions. Significant consequences have resulted, not because the racial disturbances of these migrations and invasions have been great in volume but because they have been so slight. The cultural contacts which have kindled

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great intellectual movements and fertilized whole communities to the production of new phases of civilization, and have frequently enough led to great conquests of territory and to the organization of vast empires, have been the work of a comparatively small foreign ethnological element. The leaders and captains, the seers and scholars, the missionaries and traders have been few in number yet they have often been the only real foreign ethnological elements in great fluctuations of culture. A very few instances will illustrate the truth of this. Continental scholars have argued themselves speechless as to the ethnological quality of the "Celts". To one party a Celt is a tall, blue-eyed, fair-haired German. To another he is a round-headed, dark, squat little man. To others, whatever the Celts were anatomically, they were an ethnological unit simply because they spoke a Celtic tongue. In Ireland, where one might have expected the "race" to have survived longest because in Ireland the particular congeries of customs and art motifs known as "Celtic" have survived longer than elsewhere, anthropologists who are honest have recognized that the substratum of the population is largely of the physical type known as Mediterranean, whilst genuine Celtic scholars (as distinct from the frequenters of what has too tenderly been called a Celtic twilight and

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should rather have been known as a Celtic fog) have deduced from native Irish literature, in which is enshrined a great deal of local tradition, that whereas the rank and file of Celtic society was made up of small dark-haired men, its leaders were of a different physical type: they were tall, big-boned, ruddy-haired and blue-eyed. The inference is obvious. The Celtic conquest of Ireland was either effected by a very small body of military adventurers in whom the prevailing type was what is known as Northern, or else by waves of armed immigrants of a type approximating to that of the small dark men already settled there, but led by men of the Northern type. Since many of the characteristic elements not only of the bronze-using phase of civilization in Ireland but of the Celtic and iron-using phase as well, can be traced to Scandinavia, a further inference that Ireland was colonized via the Scottish coasts and islands from the North-European mainland is hard to avoid. Again, the fact that the big fair Northern type is very much scarcer in Ireland to-day than the smaller darker type inevitably forces us to the conclusion that Ireland to-day is racially anything but a Celtic country—if, by Celtic, are meant the leaders who brought the Celtic speech and Celtic manners and customs into Ireland. If we may be forgiven for pressing

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the point still further home by a secondary illustration from Ireland, the colonial independence of the Free State, judging by the evidence of the names of the men who successfully engineered it, is less the achievement of native Irishmen (however mixed) than of the town-bred descendants of middle-class English settlers. And yet—the pre-Celtic rank and file and the English settlers alike have become so self-conscious of “Celtic” nationality that they vie with one another in endeavouring to translate their surnames into machine-made Gaelic. These things have their causes. Europe as a whole has a circulation. Oriental influences can course through the country along the Danube and the Rhine, the Rhône and the Seine and back again along the sea-coast and into the Mediterranean, or vice-versa. Ireland is an ultima thule, culturally, to-day. It is through Great Britain that contacts reach her, through Great Britain that she reacts upon the Western world, notwithstanding the flood of emigrants she has poured into America and notwithstanding the far-sighted efforts of German industrialists to exploit her and make of her another Belgium. Humanity is at its highest when it controls geography. But in the case of Ireland it is generally geography that gets the upper hand. Celtic Ireland was a reality culturally, but he would be a brave man

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who would seek to prove that Celtic Ireland has ever been a reality racially. The country exerted its maximum social influence on Europe in the days when its scholars travelled widely through Europe, deliberately overcoming their geographical position, and welcoming, in return, European influences. It was the Pale that symbolized the cutting off of the Irish population from fertilizing contacts. To-day it is the newly erected Customs barrier.

To take another illustration. England to-day is as little Saxon as Ireland is Celtic and perhaps less Norman, because the Norman strain is perfectly visible and easily distinguishable in many Norman-Irish families of the ascendancy class. (It is curious how these families seem to perpetuate the fairness—the ruddiness—of the Norman, but to have lost his bone. One notices in them the same delicacy of bone that I have many times remarked in French North African troops when examining their skeletal frame under the X-ray.) England has been invaded and conquered again and again, not only by succeeding waves of settlers of the same anthropological breed, but by military parties, led, at least, by men of different stock from the majority of the previous inhabitants. Of the Celtic invasion of England much the same can be said as has been said of the Celtic

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invasion of Ireland, except that it was launched from across the English Channel. The ruling class appears to have been of different stock from the rank and file of the inhabitants. History repeated itself with the Roman invasion. The "English" colonization was perhaps more racially homogeneous, but it was merely an invasion of armed bands who imposed their rule on the hinterland and on the existing mixed population, the majority of which, however, was still of pre-Roman and pre-Celtic stock. When the Normans came they followed the same process, but in a very thorough manner. The native and "English" aristocracy was largely dispossessed of its lands which were then given to the knights and squires of Duke William's army. Not otherwise could he have held his kingdom, won "entre prime é la nuitant" as Beneois de Sainte-More expresses it, from the hands of "un grant pople fort é fier". Not all these knights were of pure Neustrian blood—which itself, even, must have become very mixed by Duke William's time. The old chronicles¹ tell how he gave the command of his first column to

¹ Quoted by Vauquelin de la Fresnaye in his *Nouvelle Histoire de Normandie et Nouveaux Détails sur Guillaume le Conquérant*, 1814, which he bases on Dudon de Saint-Quentin, Guillaume de Jumièges, Orderic Vital, Robert Wace, and Beneois de Sainte-More, whose rhymed chronicle is in MS. in the British Museum.

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Montgomery and Fitz-Osberne, "who had with them Angevins, Bretons, Manseaux, Percherons" and the second to an un-named Norman general and to Hugh, Prince of Allemagne, and that this division was "composed of Poitevins, Boulonnois, and Allemans". The Duke took the third, which contained the Norman chivalry, which he held in reserve. If the Normans were once of the same stock as the English, it would be hard to say how many different elements went, even 900 years ago, to make up an Angevin, a Percheron, a Boulonnais, or an Alleman! What does emerge is that, speaking broadly, the ruling classes of early England were on the whole of a different ethnological *stratum* of the European population from the inhabitants whose ancestors had been born and bred in the country for countless generations. The ruling ethnological elements superimposed their laws, their language and their customs on those already existing, though with nothing like the same completeness that the Celtic tongue and Celtic laws would seem to have been imposed on Ireland—and possibly on England, too, in pre-Roman times, though the Roman occupation had too greatly disturbed the terrain for it to be easy to discover how partial or how complete such imposition had been. So long as agriculture was the staple industry of England, and so long

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as overseas trade was largely an affair of importing luxuries for the wealthy, so long did the birthrate of the ruling element maintain the old proportion of that element to the peasantry which had the longer title to the style of "native". But when the manufacturing era set in, with the sudden abnormal growth of the towns, the proportion was upset. The "natives" progressively increased their birthrate, and the city population multiplied itself over and over again, not merely from the influx of countrymen, but owing to the high fertility of the settled city population itself. Now the Roman tradition, the classical tradition, and the educational heritage of the Renaissance was very largely identified with the ruling element. With the upward surge of the older native population, overflowing its own category and helping to create, from beneath, a middle class (which the younger sons and the dispossessed of the ruling element helped to swell from above), and with the successful clamour of the masses themselves for literary instruction and a voice in the management of local and national affairs, there has been also an upward surge of habits of thought, of superstitions, of points of view foreign to the Roman tradition which, if it has been handed on to the middle class through the "younger sons", has not penetrated at all deeply into the stratum beneath.

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Thus, reinforcing that tendency to over-characterize which has increased with the passage of time, there has been this ethnological factor. The Roman classical impulse shows itself to-day as the last dying ripples of a former flood—ripples which have outstayed the ebb of the tide, as it were. But there has also been an actual diminution of the portion of the population in which the specifically Western—that is, Graeco-Roman—tradition has reposed in ratio to the countervailing increase of that far larger proportion of the population to whom it means nothing—at all events to whom it means nothing consciously. If the migrations and invasions responsible for the spread of culture had really been racial replacements of populations to the extent that used to be believed, there would not now be so general a loosening of the ties which once bound the peoples of Europe to the Western tradition.

Although national characterization has been greatly intensified since the days of Marco Polo, there has been for a generation at least an opposite tendency. Steam has been the enemy of the classical tradition in so far as it has been responsible for upsetting the balance in our population, for, as the population has increased from the strata underlying the top-dressing, this country at least has ceased to be self-supporting ; the difficulty

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of living for the upper stratum of the intermediate social class, and gradually for the ruling element itself, has so increased as to cause an actual falling off in its birth-rate, so that the disproportion between underlying and overlying strata is enhanced, as it were, by compound interest. But steam has also brought about another change. It has tended to increase and speed up culture contacts, not only between the now highly characterized European nations, but between the West and all that lies beyond the West. Thus we can discern, like the simultaneous up and down currents in a river at turn of tide, two currents in Europe flowing in opposite directions : one tending to mark off and separate peoples, the result of the old Graeco-Roman tendency to classify and fence off, to differentiate and to prevent cultural or spiritual osmosis ; and the other a new movement to facilitate and speed up international and inter-racial contacts.

In the course of this summary
Turn of analysis one significant fact has
Tide emerged, namely that the
fertilizing germs stimulating
great European phases of culture in the
past have come from easterly contacts.
If we follow these historical movements
back to their immediate source, we come

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to the Mediterranean and the Middle East. Recent scientific research in archæology has established the same fact for Europe's prehistoric phases of civilization. If European megalithic civilization reached its apogee in Brittany because two streams of culture there met and mingled, we should see them unite, if we followed the one by water and the other by land, at their proto-Mycenæan source, even though some elements had made the long journey via the Danube, Scandinavia, Ireland, and the Western and south-western coasts of Britain, whereas the others had taken the more direct route by sea to Spain, and so along the coasts of France, and yet others, branching off from the great Danubian highway, had filtered into France through gaps in the Alpine barrier. Celtic culture, again, came via the Danube to Western Europe laden with influences from the same area. The Mediterranean race itself, as its name suggests, hails thence, having entered Europe, perhaps, by way of Spain from Northern Africa. The misleadingly titled "Alpine" physical type of mankind hails from the Middle East. Agriculture and the domestication of animals have filtered westwards from this great region intermediate between West and East, as also that important discovery, metallurgy itself. The very "Northman" himself, if research has not misled

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anthropological students, wandered north-westwards from a region at least in contact with this area—from South Russia.

It would seem, then, that the fructifying impulses stimulating "Western" civilization have always been mediated by the Mediterranean, or by the lands lying around its basin. An extremely obvious discovery, indeed, once we realize that Western civilization did not spring up spontaneously in Western Europe.

Is it possible that the turmoil and ferment of these recent times, which have thrown up on their surface class warfare, the Great War, those opposite negations of democracy—Sovietism and Fascism—extravagant crops of strange religious and psychological superstitions and abnormal manifestations in art whose one constant specific feature seems to be their lack of proportion and the absence of any critical spirit informing and directing them: is it possible that these, no less than our undoubted progress in scientific knowledge (that is, in knowledge that is acquired by the most scrupulous exercise of the critical faculty and which more than anything else cultivates in the student a sense of proportion), that these are the result on the one hand of the petering out of the classical or Western impulse and the confusion consequent on an ebb of the tide, and, on the other hand, of that impulse, born of an Eastern contact

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made by Western minds in crusading times (and, even earlier, in Viking times), which Dr. Trevelyan calls "intellectual curiosity"? Have we consciously reached a phase comparable with the phase which first brought a characterized Europe into shock of contact with a characterized East, and which culminated in the Roman empire in Europe, a phase in which, by new contact with a still more highly characterized East, a new civilization and a new social order may arise on the ruins of what we call "Western civilization"—and which presents itself to-day as a characterized culture in process of disintegration?—A new culture, linked inevitably (as every phase of human thought and human activity must be linked with those that have gone before, and with those that have surrounded it in space) with the disintegrating culture, and yet emphatically not of it?

If we can discern, amid the welter of present confusion, any tendency that not only bespeaks an "urge towards the Orient" but the first signs of life springing from a new contact between Western and Eastern systems of thought, perhaps, instead of deploring what is vanishing and crumbling around us, we may be constrained to take heart of grace and look toward the future with courage and expectant hope, or even with the creative enthusiasm of those who dare to take a

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responsible part in the characterization of a new cultural movement.

* * *

In the political sphere the most evident tendency is one of impatience with the Northern notion of government by folk-moot or parliament and the Northern notion¹ of judgment by a man's peers. The essential of parliamentary government was that every free and responsible element in the state was represented and had its say in the management of what was a co-operating organization giving free allegiance to a leader. Social classes having become so highly characterized and so self-consciously categorized that their interests, from a too defiant insistence on hard and fast definition and differentiation, were liable to clash, have entirely thrown overboard the idea of equal representation of points of view in order that co-operation might the better be achieved, and have replaced it with the idea of representation by armed champions in order that, by a trial of strength, one party may get the better of and impose its will on the other. Perhaps "party

¹ Reinar Lodbrog, Scandinavian scald, warrior and judge of his people, is the reputed inventor of trial by a jury of twelve, from whom King Alfred the Great is said to have copied the idea and elaborated it. In other words, those who made a hero of Lodbrog plucked this old Norse custom as a laurel for his crown.

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government", developing with the development of the constituency represented, into a species of defensive and offensive advocacy, may have been foredoomed to become antagonistic championship as it became gradually professionalized. A sophisticated audience, accustomed to photographic representations of battle, scarcely has its pulses stirred when it is shown cavalry soldiers of its own army, charging an enemy, depicted on the cinema screen : but when a film showing a charge of Spahis was thrown on the screen, during the War, in a hospital ward full of badly wounded Senegalese infantrymen, I saw them leap from their beds with wild yells of enthusiasm to join in the fray beside their African compatriots from the North. It is possible that advocacy in parliament, like duelling, may be capable of being carried out according to a code of rules just so long as the disputants are under the sway of the tradition or convention of which those rules are in some sort a codification, but that, when men, to whom that tradition means nothing, are expected to be amenable to them, their behaviour will disappoint this expectation even although these men may have learned to express in terms of democracy their determination to champion their own interests regardless of consideration for those of others. Language is often thus

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used in a new way to convey fresh meanings. We still talk about "driving" and "pulling up" a motor-car, though we do not thereby intend to deceive anybody into thinking that we use a bit and bridle, reins and a whip. The extreme left only shocks the heirs of classic tradition when it is explicit enough to use the new terminology and to speak of class-war, the abolition of capital and private enterprise, and the extermination of the bourgeois or citizen. These assertive desires are sub-conscious in the many, and conscious in the few who have forthwith discovered the necessity for new political terms to make their intentions clear. It is a curious fact that these desires are consciously recognized and openly expressed in measure as the men and women experiencing them are less subject to that tradition of "Western civilization" which the foregoing attempt at analysis has shown to be based on Graeco-Roman thought.

Turning to the extreme Right,
Class we see men and women whose
Conflict political standpoint is equally far
removed from the Northern idea
of government by a folk-moot of representatives of all interests in the state—that is, government in the sense of the greatest common measure of agreement among all concerned. They, too,

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are champions of a category, determined that the many shall be governed by the few in the interests of an ideal state (as conceived by their own category). The difference between their ideal state and the ideal state of the extreme Left is that the state of the Left is a state entirely composed of its own very large category of the "common people" or "masses" (as distinct from the bourgeoisie or aggregation of individual citizens of varying rank, responsibility, and amount of property, in the hierarchy of the "democratic" state—an aggregation which is to be blotted out by blotting out all inequalities of function, worth, property, or responsibility), whereas the state of the extreme Right is composed of the whole of the people and retains all the unequal elements of the old democratic state, although they are not all to share the onus and dignity of governing because they are not all able to share the burdens involved in supporting and defending the state. The cruder conception of the Left—which would amputate all categories of the state other than that of a glorified Left itself—is perfectly consonant with the cultural and educational stratum from which it comes. It is a stratum not consciously influenced by the traditional system of thought on which Western civilization has been based, although its dawning con-

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sciousness that, as a stratum, it is a category by itself, is the direct result of that tradition having moulded the thought of the more cultured stratum in whose hands education has hitherto lain. Russia, at the moment, supplies a classic illustration of this extreme Left conception, and Italy of the extreme Right conception. In Russia this emancipation from the doctrines of "Western" thought (brought about, it must be realized, as a consequence of those doctrines having been developed, no less than as a consequence of their not having penetrated to all strata of the population equally) has developed *pari passu* with the social emancipation of large numbers of men and women belonging to the Jewish social organization—I do not say the Jewish "race" because Professor Pittard, even if he has not succeeded in demonstrating that "there is no Jewish race" has certainly indicated that the characteristic Jewish communities all the world over are racially very much mixed. And yet it is permissible to remark that although the class of dog popularly known as a smooth-haired foxterrier covers perhaps a greater number of half-bred dogs of aberrant type than any other fancy breed, it is still a fact that the veriest tyro is able to recognize something so characteristic in the breed that he is justified, on the one hand, in including

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in it as "foxterriers" certain dogs which are demonstrably not pure-bred, and, on the other, of excluding from it other dogs which are mongrels, although I have no doubt that the show bench and the Huntsman would fail to agree as to which points did, and which did not, constitute a full-bred foxterrier! The "Jews", then, whether "racial" or "social", have been for many centuries a persecuted people, and, for even longer, a people unpopular with those among whom they settle but who seem to be incapable of assimilating them. Such ineradicable specificity at least suggests a very retentive racial memory on the part of the Jews, reinforced socially by what we know of their religious and social customs. Although their very existence as communities apart is one of the most extraordinary instances of categorism (which we have called "Western"), we see the social emancipation of the Jews in Russia coinciding with a loosening of "Western" traditions and an almost frenzied effort to abolish categories and pales. Whatever anthropological research may finally pronounce to be the truth about the Jewish "race", it is undoubted that they are a people which became characterized in the Middle East. These facts are worth noting, if no more.

Turning to Italy, we find ourselves geographically on a sort of jetty which

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Europe has thrust out into the Mediterranean. From Venice, all along the Adriatic shores, and from island to island, we can trace one of the oldest sea-routes providing communication between that pier and the Balkan countries, the Aegean, North Africa, Egypt, Anatolia, the Black Sea, Syria, Arabia and Western Asia. Signor Mussolini consciously looks to the Roman empire for political inspiration. He honestly imagines that he is casting backwards in time for a mode of political action and that the spiritual roots of the future Fascist empire are planted on the Capitoline hill—though its branches are to cover the whole of what the imperialist Romans knew as “our sea”, the Mediterranean.

In these two extreme yet fundamentally classic instances of modern political impatience with the Western tradition, and with all that has gone to the making of it under the long persisting influence of Graeco-Roman thought, we are confronted with two apparently contradictory tendencies. In both there is categorism pushed à outrance—“our interests against the world!”—which is the inevitable consequence of the Western itch to define and classify, to mark off and contrast. And yet in both there is revealed the most overt rebellion against the predominance of Western modes of thought that Europe can show us. The

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Russian revolution began with the assertion that it was a struggle for democracy of the northernmost type. The Fascist revolution still maintains that its inspiration is classical Rome. Nothing could be more utterly removed from democracy than the régime in Russia, nothing in European political experiments looks so obviously eastwards as the new Roman régime.

What if both Lenin and **Ebb Tide?** Mussolini are but straws floating on the ebb tide that is set—eastwards—their two countries being the Marches of Europe linking her with Asia? (See how that image of a March—a borderland—a No Man's Land—suggests to us the intermediate and the indeterminate which link and unite, whereas the image of a Pale suggests at once a distinction, then a difference, then a contrast, and finally an antagonism and an irreconcilable enmity!) Ethnologically both countries contain vast numbers of people intermediate between the "Western" and the "Eastern" peoples, especially if, for the purposes of cultural mediation, we consider a North African element as a link between Western Asia and Southern Europe, and, for a moment, at least, can get out of our heads that Africa is a category by itself. Inter-

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nationally there is the phenomenon of the League of Nations. Though it may be neither the sorry farce that its detractors consider it nor the grandiose achievement that its champions proclaim it, it does exist as a witness to a new consciousness of underlying unity which is making itself felt as a steady undertow despite all the cross currents of assertive nationalism pulling in the contrary direction. The persistent glamour of the "International" for members of the political Left in all countries of Europe is another witness to the same strong undercurrent of feeling, even though it exists side by side with the bitterest of class hatred. Is it not conceivable that Versailles and Locarno are both, in their apparently different ways, manifestations of the present social tendencies of Europe—Versailles, the peak of the conscious impulse to classify, define, limit, and defend; Locarno the as yet almost sub-conscious impulse to recognize multiple unity?

Let us turn to another department of human activity, **Disappearing Boundaries** to the current tendencies of critical science. Here it is no longer a matter of tentative queries. A portent has appeared which is of the greatest significance. Shadows that we took for substantial barriers are being dissipated

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by the painstaking method of scientific experiment, and a whole collection of categories that we had come to accept as facts have been revealed as being but mere fictions born partly of our ignorance, partly of the characteristically "Western" inability to see anything whole and undivided. The achievement has been a triumph for that Western "intellectual curiosity" and Western critical and experimental method which first became characteristic of Europe in the Renaissance—but it has not been achieved by the West. East and West have had to come consciously together to achieve the result. An Eastern mind, seeing Nature whole, and working with the critical experimental science of the West, was needed, and in the fulness of time was forthcoming when Indian genius found itself in full and practised possession of Cambridge scientific method in the person of Jagadis Bose, the Bengali physicist. Centuries hence men may point to Bose as a conveniently identifiable point from which to date the dawn of the new thought, just as to-day we put our finger on Socrates when we wish to focus our view of the beginning of that new thought which inspired the West for centuries, and to say: "Here is our landmark: here the new can be said to have been first recognizable as something that was characteristically different."

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A brief glance at the significant results of this Indian researcher's discoveries will illustrate, better than any attempt to define it, what is implied in the Oriental conception of the Dance of Çiva which I have taken as the symbolic title of this essay to discern the continuous thread running through the apparent tangle of to-day, linking yesterday with to-morrow and to-morrow inevitably with yesterday.

Western science has grown
The "Dance" up so entirely in the tradition
in Matter of Western thought that very
few have questioned whether
the current distinctions between living and
non-living, organic and inorganic are
based on real differences in kind or
merely on the idiosyncrasies of Western
modes of thinking. (Speaking a Western
language, I cannot even suggest what I
mean without making use of the expression
"*difference in KIND*"!) Construction and
destruction have been accepted as
mutually antagonistic realities. But the
work done by physicists since Röntgen's
accidental discovery has revealed to us
an actual scientific fact fully justifying the
Indian conception of the Dance of Çiva—
which is continuous, and which is both
constructive and destructive at one and
the same time. What was not visible to
the human eye—and therefore by the

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thoughtless many had been assumed not to exist—was the intimate structure of the atom which had once been considered to be the basic particle of matter. It would be rash to differentiate what goes on inside the radioactive or the artificially bombarded atom as now definitely destruction and now definitely construction, for when one pattern is disintegrating another is in process of forming. Matter itself, in its “kinds”, is a question of the pattern of the atoms building it up, and such categories as liquid and solid are conventional. The intimate study of crystals that has been made possible by the use of X-rays has revealed that not only are the characteristic crystals of different substances themselves forms or patterns, but that the interior arrangement of a crystal is also a pattern. Changes of structure have been revealed to be changes of pattern or arrangement, and so-called “différences” in categories of substances have been shown to be essentially differences in the kind of arrangement. If we think how truly an Indian dance is a question of “patterns”—changing patterns that unceasingly melt into one another—the symbolism of the Dance of Çiva appears to be poetic in that highest sense in which poetry is a perception of the specific significance and beauty that informs an idea or thing and renders it

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alive and valid. The Western no less than the Eastern man has always known that the procession of the seasons, and the cycles of seed-time and harvest have been characterized by their continuous rhythm, their "life" dissolving into a sleep of "death" in which a mysterious and unseen activity has gone on which in due time once more emerges, as "life", from death. The beauty of the rhythm—the "Dance"—has again and again kindled poetry in the mind of the men who have reflected on it, as witness all those myths in which a personified figure of life and light, of activity, has retired into a dark and mysterious cave, or has disappeared into darkness over the rim of the ocean, only to reappear at the appointed season—or after propitiatory performances by those bereft of the vision¹—in new vigour and splendour, hailed by the rejoicing of gods and men. Those myths have generally been traced to a source in the East, but they had come to be at home in the West long before the Romans made Western Europe a province of their great empire. Traces of this exultant recognition of Nature's rhythm are to be found scattered over the Gaelic poetry of Ireland. There is that poem, translated by Kuno Meyer, called "Summer has come", in which the poet, after a procession of

¹ See, for the Japanese version, the *Nihongi*, Aston's transl., vol. i, pp. 41-9.

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pictures of what resurgence means in the countryside, naively confesses :—

A wild longing is on you to race horses,
The ranked host is ranged around :
A bright shaft has been shot into the land,
So that the water-flag is gold beneath it.

Kuno Meyer says of them : " It is a characteristic of these poems that in none of them do we get an elaborate or sustained description of any scene or scenery, but rather *a succession of pictures and images . . .* " ¹ Again, consciousness of the Dance. The conception has been there, dormant, all through, but Western science, even if stimulated by an intellectual curiosity resulting from new Eastern contacts in the Middle Ages, has been so much influenced by traditional Graeco-Roman thought that it has almost mechanically erected pales and made divisions where the tyranny of this mode of thought has indicated that they ought to appear. The most ignorant school child will state without a moment's hesitation that a rock is " essentially " different from a plant, and a plant from an animal. He is but deepening the track worn in our habits of thought by the student and professor of science, who jealously marks out the territories and will brook no trespassing across the borders of biology

¹ *Ancient Irish Poetry*, 1911, p. 55 (" Summer is come ") and pp. xii-xiii of the Introduction.

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by the physicist, and resents it when physiology is explored by the chemist, or even when the physiologist dares to study the mind—conceived of in the West only as distinct from the body! The least scientific of these compartments of knowledge—their petty kings love to style them “disciplines”—is the most jealously hedged and fenced of them all—namely the practice of medicine, and that because it has not yet freed itself from the esotericism of the medicine-man who boldly claimed that his arts were based on magic. Medicine, as conceived of by many of the rank and file, is not a facet of the knowable, to be approached freely by whosoever comes humbly with a desire to learn and a critical mind wherewith to probe facts, but a guild of practitioners whose principles and methods must be kept secret from lay eyes. Where this is not an interesting anthropological relic of magical practices or witchcraft it is the result of a rigid compartmentalism of thought which has allowed itself to become so obsessed with the distinction between health and disease that it has hypnotized itself into imagining that the study of the “morbid” and the “pathologic” is so absorbing that there is no time to look over that phantom hedge and contemplate the normal. Thence it was but a very little way to the position that the pathological was so horrid that the

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ordinary man must not be allowed to look upon it. And the situation was complicated by religious factors, because religion was equally category-ridden and had learned to divide the Flesh from the Spirit so successfully that it was logically bound to look upon physiological facts as horrid in themselves—a fundamentally different attitude, be it noted, from that of an Asiatic who regards his body as “karma” or as illusion and who desires to be free of it in order that he may realize absolute Being or achieve absolute non-Being. This attitude on the part of medicine has reacted powerfully on Western thought in its approach to the scientific study of physiology and psychology, and has undoubtedly favoured the growth of quackery and popular nostrums while at the same time it has promoted the advance of pathological medicine itself by the supply of more abundant material for experiment, in that it has been an attitude which has kept the general public ignorant of the laws of health and, by preventing people from recognizing the significant and beautiful rhythms of physiological life, has failed to restrain them from interfering with or damaging their exquisite equilibrium.

Bose was already stirred
Compensation to intellectual curiosity as a
child in India. He had a
wise father—a magistrate under the

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British raj—who, instead of dogmatizing, or silencing his son, when he asked hard questions, had the courage to reply, "We do not yet know the reason why." Bose overcame all difficulties in his path and went to Cambridge to study science. He was able to adopt a completely critical attitude and to train his mind so thoroughly in accuracy that in after life he constructed scientific instruments and devised experiments of a refinement so extreme as never to have been surpassed and scarcely to have been equalled in European laboratories. Indian students who seek a Western education neglect, as a rule, to study their own history and their own thought. And this is no new phenomenon special to the case of Indian students. The glorification of any foreign learning at a moment when inquiring minds, by contact with other societies, become conscious of stagnation in their native society, or when, after a period of geographical isolation, the thinkers in a society become ambitious to assimilate the new ideas with which they are confronted and so to redress the balance of intellectual equipment between their own people and that of the people whose enhanced culture has temporarily made the native culture seem limited by comparison—this glorification is very old in history and is evident in pre-history.

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Archæology is often constrained to stand amazed at the rapidity and completeness with which a new type of artefact or a new custom has spread from its area of characterization to the most distant parts. Research is constantly revealing how far afield these waves of cultural influence are propagated once they have been set going. Sir Aurel Stein's fascinating volumes¹ have shown how thoroughly Greek artistic influence spread to the confines of China, there to mingle with a westerly flowing wave and to produce, not a bastard type of art, but one of those intermediate forms, midway between two which are highly characteristic, which are as important for the study of civilization as the specific forms themselves. What is true of art and artefacts is true of thought. Sir Aurel Stein, again, has traced the very footsteps of Hsüan-tsang and of Fa-hsien, who in the fifth century made a pilgrimage from China to India, across the Gobi, carrying back to China with them the canons of an Indian religion and an Indian system of metaphysics, there to start veritable schools of Indian culture.² When, in turn,

¹ *Ruins of Desert Cathay and Sand-buried Ruins of Khotan.*

² Buddhism first appeared in China about the close of the first century A.D., but the Indian missionaries and Chinese pilgrims were still engaged in active propaganda up till the seventh

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Korean emissaries carried the Buddhist religion and Chinese culture over to Japan in the sixth and seventh centuries¹ there was as great a superficial absorption of Chinese culture and Chinese ideas by the island people as there has been in our own epoch of Western culture and Western ideas. It was only many centuries after the balance had been redressed, so to speak, that there was a revulsion of feeling (initiated by a literary coterie) and a self-conscious turning back to Japanese culture and a deliberate rejection of everything foreign. And, since this digression will illustrate the point made earlier in this essay that the summit of an ascent is also the beginning of the descent, and that the turn of a tide is the moment when the current appears to be flowing in two opposite directions at once, it is a remarkable fact that the peak of this Japan-for-the-Japanese phase—the restoration of the Mikado and the abolition of the Shōgunate (1868),

century and the object of Fa-hsien in going to India, for instance, as indicated in his own record of the journey (A.D. 400), was to try to obtain the "Rules" of the Buddhist "Disciplines". See H. A. Giles' new translation of *The Travels of Fa-hsien*, 1923, and S. Beal's translation of Hsüan-tsang's *Si-Yu-Ki*, 1869.

¹ Sino-Japanese intercourse, according to the Japanese annals, began a century or two earlier, and there are still earlier Chinese references to contemporaneous Japanese affairs.

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the restoration of Shintō as the state religion, and the disestablishment of Buddhism (1871)—practically coincided with the final penetration of the hermit kingdom by the new Western culture,¹ conveniently symbolized for the students of Japanese international relations by Commodore Perry's guns. This rhythmic dissolution of achieved patterns at the apogee of their characterization into the early phases of new patterns to be evolved from their disintegration would seem to be something inherent in all experience, since in general it is true to say that the attained peak of any effort is practically coincident with utter relaxation, and the achievement of completed satisfaction coincident with the utter cessation of desire. It is but another aspect of the Dance of Çiva.

To return to Bose. It would
Multiple appear from his own confession
Unity that his early scientific experiments in the stimulation of the non-living to yield auto-records of responses caused him to understand "for the first time a little of that message proclaimed by my ancestors on the banks

¹ This penetration began with the arrival of Portuguese ships in 1542, which directly led to the hermit policy of the Shōgun Iemitsu, who shut the country up to prevent foreign complications.

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of the Ganges thirty centuries ago :
' They who see but one in all the changing manifoldness of the universe, unto them belongs Eternal Truth—unto none else, unto none else ! ' " ¹ He had accepted our Western conception of the universe so completely that it had not occurred to him even to wonder whether Eastern rather than Western conceptions might prove the more compatible with the results of critical examination and scientifically conducted experiment. Bose admits, even now, that a " chasm appears to exist between life and non-life, and also between the two types of life, plant and animal." ² But he has experimentally discovered it to be difficult even at this early stage to say that here the physical ends and the physiological begins. It was his Western science which urged him to seek " fundamental unity amidst apparent diversity "—though the Western researcher himself is not always conscious of where such a discovery would lead him. But it was his Eastern heritage of centuries of tradition affirming this fundamental unity that saved him from ignoring this unity when experimentally he found it. In the hands of the younger generation of physicists and biologists,

¹ Friday Evening Discourse at the Royal Institution, 10th May, 1901.

² Convocation Address, Punjab University, 19th December, 1924.

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as Professor J. S. Haldane has admitted,¹ there are signs of a gradual approximation of what he calls the "new physics", to the standpoint of the "new biology". In Professor Haldane's opinion we "need to go down to the atom to get near life. As we go deeper and deeper into the nature of 'matter'—as we see what happens to solids at extremely low temperatures, for instance, we find something quite unintelligible on the old Newtonian ideas. For example, cool a diamond down to a very low temperature—to 200 cent. below zero—and you find that it pays practically no attention to what we call temperature. Mechanically, it certainly ought to ! But in fact the laws of molecular mechanism simply go to pieces. You are led to the quantum theory which implies that an atom will not give up or take up its motion as you try to cool or warm it: it behaves in this respect like a living organism, which is constantly defeating, by adapted reactions, what might be expected to be the mechanical effect of changes in environment. In many ways physics is altering fundamentally, and its basic conceptions seem to be coming very near to those necessary to biology. It is hard to define the real tendencies of the present—

¹ In an interview granted to the present writer and published in abridged form in the *Daily Chronicle*, 1st June, 1925.

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much harder to speak of the future ; but I think it is quite certain that the apparent difference between inorganic and organic phenomena is going to disappear. A few years ago there seemed to me to be a wide gap between them. Now, with relativity, the quantum theory, and the behaviour of the atom, it looks quite different—as though common ground between physics and biology were being found. But it is physics that is moving nearer to biology. The machinery idea, except as a very convenient abstraction, is destined to disappear in the near future, I think. The fundamentally different conceptions which seemed to separate biology and physics are being found unnecessary.”¹

Professor Haldane is now engaged in showing² how a Scots lecturer to the East India Company's establishment for naval cadets at Bombay, J. J. Waterston,² was a physicist who had already advanced very near to this scientific conception of multiple unity underlying apparent diversity. He considers him to be the only great physicist who has directly considered from a physical standpoint the characteristic features of human and organic behaviour, reaching

¹ Ibid.

² The unpublished works of J. J. Waterston, ed. by Professor J. S. Haldane, in course of preparation for the Press.

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the judgment that nothing known of physical and chemical properties could explain this behaviour. Haldane himself insistently emphasizes the fact that an organism belongs to its environment just as much as its parts belong to one another. "Our Environment is bone of our bone and flesh of our flesh." Thus we do see the Western mind, moving within the accustomed limits imposed by Western habits of thought, wrestling with a dawning suspicion of "multiple unity" in its absolute sense and struggling to make it fit into the framework of Western modes of expressing reality. It was here that India's traditional ways of thought smoothed the way for Bose. His mind got no shock when he realized that "the responsive processes seen in life have been fore-shadowed in non-life", and therefore he was able to state, at the inauguration of the Bose Institute in Calcutta, that "we have already experimentally discovered that the physiological is related to the physico-chemical—that there is no abrupt break, but a continuous march of law."¹ Addressing the students at the Convocation of the University of Punjab two years later, Sir Jagadis Bose said:

"India through her habit of mind is

¹ Sir J. C. Bose's Inaugural Address at the Dedication of the Bose Institute, 30th November, 1917.

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peculiarly fitted to realize in the phenomenal world an underlying unity amidst a bewildering diversity. The first glimpse of this continuity I caught when working with a wireless receiver. Its response was found to become feebler and feebler till it died away, and the records showed an astonishing similarity with the fatigue curve of our own muscle. When a period of rest was given, the response became vigorous once more, to exhibit decline under continuous stimulation. Thinking that rest for several days would make it still more sensitive, I was surprised to find that it had become passive from prolonged idleness; the lethargy could then be removed only by stirring it up by a mechanical or an electric shock. Certain chemical stimulants made the receiver extraordinarily sensitive, while poisons killed all power of response. I was amazed to find boundary lines vanishing and points of contact emerge between the realms of the Living and Non-Living. Inorganic substance was found to be anything but inert, for it was a-thrill under the action of multitudinous forces that played on it. Matter had thus within itself the promise and potency of life. Between inorganic matter at one extreme and animal life at the other, there is spread the vast expanse of vegetable life. All authorities deny that

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there could be any essential similarity in the life-mechanism of the plant seemingly inert and irresponsive, and that of the restless animal with its reflex movements and pulsating organs. There are some, on the other hand, who without any proof, but through mere sentimentality, attribute to plants even human qualities. But these imaginings cannot in any way advance exact knowledge. The similarity, if any, between plant and animal life can only be established by demonstrating the unity of physiological mechanism in all life."

This quotation¹ (from the printed Address sent to the writer by Sir Jagadis Bose in 1925) illustrates admirably the outlook of an Eastern mind controlled by the critical spirit and trained in the patient and accurate methods of scientific experimentation which it is the glory of the West to have elaborated. The famous Paris paper, read before the Congrès International de Physique in 1900, described the experiments by which he had demonstrated parallels between the responses to excitation of both living and organic matter, and was followed by experiments in London in which he found that by poisoning metals and plants he could obtain curves of response resembling those yielded by

¹ Convocation Address (University of Punjab), 19th December, 1924.

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poisoned animals. It was at the Royal Institution discourse that he asked "How can we draw a line of demarcation and say, here the physical ends and there the physiological begins?" and answered his own question by saying, "Such absolute barriers do not exist." If I may so put it, Bose's Eastern mind, having received a hint, took it, and, not being deterred by inherited Western habits of thought, this Indian physicist set about inventing and constructing instruments of almost incalculable delicate by which the responses of plants to stimuli might be self-recorded. Having invented and constructed the now famous electric probe and other marvellous instruments, Bose was able to show that both the animal and the plant exhibit similar contractile twitches when struck, the motile mechanism in both being essentially similar. A very elaborate nervous system in plants was discovered and demonstrated. "Within the placid exterior of the tree throbbing tissues have been found, the pulsation of which is the heart-beat. At the supreme crisis of death a violent spasm occurs in the plant which corresponds with the death-throe of the animal. The barriers which separated kindred phenomena are thrown down, and we realise that vast unity in which all living organisms, from the simplest plant to the highest animal,

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are linked together.”¹ Investigation into the simpler life of plants held out the possibility of explaining the most complex and intricate reactions of animal life. This expectation has been justified. “Several unexpected phenomena found in the plant have led to the discovery of corresponding phenomena even in human life. Very surprising also are the identical effects of drugs, of stimulants and of poisons on the two types of life. A particular poison, by itself fatal, has been found to act as an antidote to another poison. These results are regarded by leading physicians as of signal importance in the advance of the science of medicine.”² By the aid of the magnetic crescograph, a super-magnifying instrument, which, by a magnification of 100 million times visualises and measures the infinitely slow rate of plant growth, Bose has been able to lay bare the laws of growth and to discover electrical and chemical stimulants which would enhance plant-growth. Even the puzzling phenomenon of spontaneity or automatism has had light thrown on it by these intimate

A living organism has, however, the power of slowly accumulating within itself the

¹ Convocation Address, Punjab University.

² Ibid.

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energy absorbed from outside and holding it latent. It is this stored energy that bubbles over in apparent spontaneity. In order to keep the living mechanism at work, in all those wonderful and complex ways of which it is capable—from mechanical movement, through throbbing sensation to spontaneous thought—something more than mechanical perfection is necessary. When the organism is kept isolated from its surroundings, it soon ceases its functional activity. In order to maintain it in fulness of life and spontaneous overflow, the inpouring of energy from without is essential. It must therefore stand in constant communion with all the forces of the universe about it. . . . In the life of the tree there must be means for the conduction of all external stimulation to energize the living cells in the interior, without which they would die of inanition. There must also be mutual adjustment and mutual control among widely separated organs.”¹

The nervous system of the plant discovered by Bose, secures this. A shock to the remotest twig or leaf is perceived by the tree as a whole. Lack of stimulation produces nervous flabbiness, as in human beings. A plant under glass looks well but is flabby because its highest nervous function is disused and atrophied. But if the plant be toned up by repeated

¹ Ibid.

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blows the nerves gradually recapture their efficiency. The conclusion reached is that every moment of the present is enriched by the store of latent memories, which is nothing but the imprint of previous stimulation in the form of "experience". Stimulation by thought increases the power of thought, for it is by the accumulation of such stimuli that nervous matter ultimately becomes automatic, a phase which is seen in many steps from the birth of thought to inspiration.

Co-ordination of the nervous organs in a plant has also been discovered by Bose to be effected for the advantage of the community. "I find that an ingoing or sensory impulse is actually sent to certain centres in the interior which may be regarded as executive in their function. The most astonishing thing now occurs in response to the message. The energy that had been conserved becomes discharged with almost explosive intensity and rapidity. An outgoing or motor impulse is thus generated for the readjustment of the outlying organs to meet the crisis."¹ Continuity, Sir Jagadis justly claims, is thus established between the simplest and the most complex type of life, an evolution from rudimentary beginnings towards perfection. In a communication to *The Times* of 30th December, 1925,

¹ Ibid.

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from its Calcutta correspondent, there is some account of a further discovery of Sir Jagadis Bose, made public on 30th November, 1925.¹ This is the muscular system of the plant, and the actual location of the heart that propels the sap from the roots to its uttermost leaves. Quoting from the lecture in which Bose made this discovery public (for Bose, as he announced when he dedicated the Bose Institute, first demonstrates his discoveries before the public at the Institute, and then publishes them in its Transactions), the article says : " When electric contact is made with a resting muscle, the galvanometer remains quiescent. But if the contact be made with the beating heart, electric pulsations are generated corresponding to the mechanical pulsations. In localizing the heart, I introduce the probe step by step across the stem ; as soon as it comes into contact with the pulsating layer, electric signals are sent out which are automatically recorded by the galvanograph. Every active cell during its phase of expansion absorbs water from below and expels it upwards during the phase of the contraction. The heart of the plant is like the elongated heart of some of the lower

¹ See also *The Nervous Mechanism of Plants*, 1926, and " The Nerves of Plants," by Sir J. Bose, in *The Illustrated London News* for 10th July, 1926.

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animals, such as that of the earthworm, in which peristaltic action propels the circulating fluid."

Bose told the Punjab **Civilization** students that there can be no humiliation in our kinship with the lowest of the low, but rather matter for pride. In the ascent the most important factor has been the ever-growing elaboration of the nervous system. "Man, by opening himself at will to new areas of stimulation is thereby determining his own higher evolution." Bose finds that "the thrill in matter, the throb of life, the pulse of growth, the impulse coursing through the nerve and its resulting sensation" are diverse yet wonderfully unified. "How strange it is that the tremor of excitation in nervous matter should not merely be transmitted, but transmuted and reflected like the image on a mirror, from a different plane of life, in sensation and in affection, in thought and in emotion. Which of them is undecaying and which is beyond the reach of death?" This Indian biophysicist would not be astonished to discover in thought—which to him is the highest response to stimuli yet known to us, and the very germ of life that is immortal — a continuation, infinitely evolved, of the "thrill in matter". Would he be astonished to find in the

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active disintegration and reintegration of the innermost structure of atoms a foreshadowing of the same "thrill" he demonstrated in his wireless receiver? The true heir of Socrates could never accept it. But the true heir of Socrates seems to be making but a poor business of social life at the present day. Like Bose's plant, so glossy and apparently well-looked under glass, his intellectual nervous system is flabby and debilitated from want of outside stimulation. Smash the containing and isolating glass in which it is shut off from living contact with its proper environment, and the shocks that forthwith rain upon it will soon re-educate the atrophied nerves to fulfil their function and cause the flaccid plant to react healthily to its environment.

The work of Bose surely answers the question we have asked of it. There is a new and marked tendency visible in critical thought to-day to ignore phantom barriers and to investigate experimentally whether the Oriental conception of the multiple unity is not a more demonstrably true apprehension of reality than the aspects under which Western thought hitherto has envisaged it—characterized by the antitheses and antagonisms arising out of a compartmentalized view of the universe in which mind is opposed to matter, and the

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knowledge of the physical properties of matter and the laws regulating it is conceived as something other in kind from the properties of life and its laws, or the mind and its laws, or the "soul" of man and its laws. May there not be an underlying unity of bio-physio-psychological laws with the laws governing the reaction of the human being to society (its human environment), and of society to the larger environment of the universe? Might it not be that the Chinese thinkers who envisaged morality under the aspect of conformity with the general law—or Way—of Nature had caught a glimpse of Truth from an angle that has escaped the rest of the world? Their reduction of cosmic order even to terms of domestic politics has seemed to Western minds a strange local idiosyncrasy, but the analogy of self-control and co-ordination of self with the control and co-ordination of a state, and of both of these with the control and co-ordination regulating the universe, may be no more essentially peculiar than the Western mode of seeing an antithesis between almost everything that the human mind can manage to characterize and so conceive of as distinct in aspect.

If the characteristic Western civilization appears to so many of its votaries to be tottering while to others it seems to be at its apogee, may not the explana-

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tion be that, as something specific, it has reached the peak of its curve and that the tide of human culture is now setting in the inverse direction?

If disintegration of a characteristic arrangement of patterns is not decay but simply the first phase of evolution of a new pattern which, in its turn, will achieve an equal degree of characterization—simply a new sinuosity in the serpentine grace of the Dance of Çiva—is there any necessity for lamentations over what is already passing away, and might we not profitably exercise our energies and intellectual faculties in making the best of what is coming? Wise men and women do not waste time and energy in bewailing their spent youth but meet maturity with hearty welcome, and before they have realized that the fleeting moment of maturity is also gone they are hailing with proud triumph the age of accomplished effort. Those who face backwards are those who are most likely to stumble over the difficulties of the way. Nature's record is strewn with such failures. By them the naturalist can mark the approximate stages of our evolution. "Backward races," Neanderthal Man, the existing anthropoid apes, the New World monkeys, the Lemurs, the Tarsioids—all so many Pillars of Salt pointing out to us where the unprogressive cousins of our direct

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ancestors, refusing to keep something in hand for future emergencies and temporary adaptations, preferred to make believe that the world stands still and thus foolishly adapted themselves so permanently to their already passing needs that they have either died out or been left hopelessly behind in the race by the runner who went on opening himself, in Bose's striking phrase, to new stimuli, and elaborating and improving his nervous system by giving it the hardest exercise. History, too, is strewn with witnesses to the failure of nation after nation to move with the times. It is sometimes put forward, by way of excuse, that disease or catastrophe has annihilated a group that was in every way worthy of survival. It is a moot point whether any organism that fails to register the approach of danger and react to it really deserves to survive, for survival is life's own measure of reward for desserts. In F. E. Maning's entertaining account of "Old New Zealand"¹ there is an illuminating passage in which he tells how the Maori people were once more numerous than they were in the days in which he knew them. They had no firearms, and their hill-forts were adapted to their

¹ First published in 1863 in Auckland and London, re-issued in Melbourne and London in 1912.

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existing methods of defence necessitating a life centred in large fortified camps on high ground. With the introduction of firearms their whole technique of warfare changed. It was no longer necessary to sleep in entrenched hill-forts. They could dwell in villages down in the flat lands (since these could be defended by gun fire) nearer their fields, but on swampy soil. And they fell ill and died in their hundreds of marsh fever. But the bias of their intellect which had enabled them immediately to recognize the value of firearms as a weapon did not enable them to recognize the nature of their new enemy. They put it down to witchcraft, and even when warned by the white traders, refused to abandon their convenient swamps and return to the tiresome custom of retiring for the night to hill-top camps. They paid the price in the decimation of their race, which, from all accounts, was a stock in every way admirable. It would not appear, indeed, from anthropology or history that the apparently admirable always survived. Mistakes were made, and the world rolled on and the place of the failures knew them no more, and they might have been forgotten had it not been for their reactions on their neighbours, or the chance preservation of records, or the researches of historians and antiquaries.

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It would almost seem **Adaptation** that national life, like individual life, is dependent on a constant awareness of environment or constant flexibility of reaction stimulating the degree of adaptation to the constant chances and changes of environment as they occur from day to day; that adaptation is really a *control* of environment rather than permanent adaptation to environment which may be only temporary. If this awareness or receptivity slackens, and control be lost, Nemesis descends. Sometimes the environmental stimulus has been climatic, sometimes human. It would seem that migrations have been reactions which have saved some groups from annihilation, whereas in other cases the stimulus has provoked a gradual acceptance of a new culture resulting from external contacts.

The most absorbing and fascinating study in the world would be a research into the reasons why some groups have failed to respond and have practically died out, or at all events been submerged beneath a stratum of more vital population. Some groups have clung to the soil and rather than resist or move on have permitted new cultures to flow over them, even to the point of submitting to conquest by relatively small numbers,

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accepting from their new masters new languages and new customs. And sometimes when the conquering invaders have allowed themselves from sheer lack of energy to sink down to the level of the existing population, or have died out from inferiority of birthrate, or have agreed to share the government equally with the conquered, thus voluntarily relinquishing their domination, the substratum is seen to have completely assimilated the new elements so that it would be difficult to say which people had really been the conquerors and which the conquered. Nations come and nations go, and the world wags on its way. Sometimes there seems to be a spurt of progress, and the impulse, like a wave in the ether, carries right round the world before its disturbing power ceases to evoke response. At other times there seems to be a retrogression, and valuable elements of human civilization are apparently lost. Progress should be measured in hundreds of thousands of years, as it is in the physiological ascent of life, and even in the anatomical evolution of mankind. Then we are enabled to mark definite acquisitions. Within historical times it is harder to appraise progress. It would be more illuminating, perhaps, to try to discover, by comparative methods of study, what it is that leads to national dissolution, and

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what to evolution. At all events we can see that extreme characterization, extended over a long period, usually gives place, more or less rapidly once the process begins, to a period of apparent chaos, out of which appears a new characterization ; whereas, in the cultures which it has been less easy to differentiate from their neighbours or from periods before and after them, evolution has been gradual, and if there have been no discernible epochs of outstanding brilliancy, neither have there been periods of chaos.

We can also see that characterization, on the whole, has been persistently Eastern and Western, with an intermediate region in the Middle East and the Mediterranean. This has been true in prehistoric no less than in recent times. It would be interesting to discover if this has been a geographical accident or the result of genuinely racial factors. In either case it would seem that the heart of organized human society most often beats somewhere in the Mediterranean or Middle East, and that the nervous and circulating systems of the organism have been well contrived to carry impulses both to East and West. This essay has attempted to follow, for a small space of time, the Westward branch, and it has certainly seemed that at the moment when the outward impulse has succeeded in reaching its apogee of intensity, there has been a

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coincident contraction and that the impulse is now flowing inversely from the Western periphery towards the centre.

Probably if we shifted our point of observation we should recognize something very similar in the Eastern half of the organism. At this very moment, when the influence of the West in the East had seemed at its intensest, there has been set up a definite anti-Western impulse—an impulse which is observable in an effort to eject men of Western race from all posts in national life, and a movement to assert the superiority of all that is native in Eastern culture. And yet, with it and hardly distinguishable from it, there has been the contrary impulse to assimilate and adopt ideas and customs that, in fact, are derived from the West!¹ The desire to get rid of the Western trader and irksome Western restrictions on liberty has gone hand in hand with an increased use of Western armament, Western mechanical contrivances, Western modes of thought, Western political systems and Western scientific method.

Is it extravagant to see in present-day

¹ The Indian institution of "Caste" might be urged as the apotheosis of categoryism. But what is India? Does she exist only from the time of the early northern invasions? And is there anything to prove that Caste is a native institution, or that it is as rigid in practice as in theory?

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tendencies a contraction in the organism of human society as a whole in which the East comes closer to the modes and manner of the West, and the West, half against its will, is moving eastward? The ascendancy classes in both East and West are those which constitute the lag or the braking power on this double tendency. Is it possible that this is due to the fact that the substratum in either is less clearly differentiated in tradition, if in naught else, from the other, than is the case with the numerically more exiguous top stratum?

If there is something in this suggestion, vague and formless though it be, we can now begin to make out fairly clearly the outlines of that wood which has hitherto been invisible to us for the trees.

The present turmoil and **Germination** chaos almost everywhere and in almost every stratum of social life would seem to be due to the ferment of new ideas from without working in a native medium—to the penetration from without of a fertilizing element stirring into violent activity the matrix with which this vital contact has been made. Disintegration of characters to which we have been accustomed would seem to be merely a rearrangement of pattern. We discern

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a continuous process which is destruction and construction in one—a process we can visualize as a dance (in the Oriental sense), and which we can figure as the Dance of Çiva in that, although it is supple and continuous, it is also marked by appreciable rhythm. One of the most essential rhythms of life is that controlled by the beating heart muscle—the rhythmical ebb and flow of the sap of vitality, now urging out to the uttermost leaf or twig, now surging back towards the centre. The ferment that we see, when we are so close to it that “the wood is invisible for the trees” may appear to us as a chaos, but it is actually the beat of a rhythm, the returning surge of an impulse propelled outward from a centre, back to that centre, so that while Westernism has seemed to be at its height in the West a new urge towards the East has begun, and while the East has seemed to be at its most obstinately and specifically Oriental it is actually experiencing a reaction towards the West, marked by its very anxiety lest Western foreigners should come too closely in contact with its native inviolability.

When these currents meet and mingle, as culture currents all down the ages appear to have met and mingled in the Mediterranean and the Middle East, we may hope to see the beginnings of a new characteristic

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civilization emerge, something which shall unite vital elements in each. The present generation can hardly hope to see more than the beginnings, but it is the present generation, both in the East and the West, that will help to impress its pattern on this civilization. If a single man, like Socrates, could give such a clear imprint to the Graeco-Roman civilization which is gone that it persisted into the old Western civilization fashioned somewhat in the Graeco-Roman image, there is no reason why some individual genius may not arise now and stamp some indelible hallmark on the civilization that is to be. At all events a culture is a sum of many men's actions and many men's ideas. There is hardly one of us who will not be responsible for some molecule of influence that will go vibrating down the ages in the atomic pattern or combination we impose on it, just as we ourselves, to-day, are reacting to the influence exerted on culture by all the men and women who have gone before us, not to probe any further back into our evolutionary history. If we realize that we are linked thus to yesterday and to-morrow, each one of us to-day should be able to spell out something of the story of the past or to send an intelligible message echoing far down the future.

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